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Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Library Program

Letter No. 2670 **July 15, 1994**

NEW LOOK -- This week you'll notice a new look and a new name for this newsletter. We'll continue to highlight USDA news announcements, provide story tips, and tell you how to access our regular broadcast services. Our scope will broaden to cover the wide variety of information that is part of USDA's mission. Along with farm and agricultural information, we'll include items on food and consumer services, natural resources and environment, small community and rural development, and science and education. That's why **Farm Broadcasters Letter** becomes **Broadcasters Letter** with this issue.

ASSISTANCE TO SOUTHEAST FLOOD VICTIMS -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy joined President Clinton in Georgia this week (July 13) to survey flood damage resulting from Tropical Storm Alberto. Espy reviewed a range of USDA disaster assistance efforts underway. All states have USDA food stocks on hand that can be used to help people immediately. Most food is provided through disaster assistance agencies like the Red Cross. Emergency food stamps are being issued in needed counties. USDA's Farmers Home Administration has opened several disaster assistance centers to provide information on emergency loans. Espy said the Emergency Watershed Protection Program will provide relief from imminent hazards to life and property resulting from Alberto's effects. USDA estimates that more than 846,674 acres of cropland have been affected by flooding. This includes peanut, cotton, corn, soybean and pasture crops in Georgia, Florida and Alabama. USDA's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation staff are visiting flooded areas to ensure that FCIC and private insurers are prepared to handle claims for insured crop losses. **Contact: Johna Pierce (202) 720-1691**.

IMPROVED POULTRY INSPECTION -- On July 11, Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy announced a poultry enhancement program that provides for a single, more stringent poultry inspection system to replace multiple types currently used nationally in federally inspected poultry plants. Secretary Espy says this proposal represents a zero tolerance standard plus many other improvements for poultry inspection. Espy emphasized that this proposal is part of USDA's ongoing efforts "to use the best available science in conjunction with good common sense to improve the safety of our food supply." A USDA Task Force including input from two on-line federal inspectors developed this proposal over the past year. A 90-day public comment period began July 13. **Contact: Patrick Collins (202) 720-0283.**

EMPOWERMENT ZONES/ENTERPRISE COMMUNITIES -- More than 500 local communities with their own visionary ideas for community revitalization have applied to be Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities. Nine Empowerment Zones (six urban and three rural) and 95 Enterprise Communities (65 urban and 30 rural) will be designated through a nationwide competition according to a joint announcement by Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Henry Cisneros. The program will help some of the most impoverished communities across the country take control over their own destiny through economic development. The designated Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities will have access to up $3 billion of federal resources. **Contact: Jim Brownlee (202) 720-2091.**

NATIONAL RESOURCES INVENTORY -- USDA's Soil Conservation Service released a comprehensive study of the condition and trends of the nation's soil, water and related resources this week. Collected in 1992, data from this National Resources Inventory show that average erosion rates on cropland nationwide are one-third lower than in 1982 and that conversion of wetlands to agricultural use has decreased substantially. Issued every five years, this report points out that rural and urban development continues to claim prime farmland. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Richard Rominger said the report shows that American agriculture is making significant conservation progress while maintaining the world's most reliable and abundant food supply. **Contact: Diana Morse (202) 720-4772.**

WHEAT IMPORT RESTRAINTS -- The United States International Trade Commission has found that wheat imports are interfering with the domestic wheat program. All commissioners recommended restraints on wheat imports. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy said these findings confirm USDA's view that imports from Canada are reducing prices for U.S. producers and increasing budget costs of the wheat program. Secretary Espy pledged to pursue all alternatives to restrain imports and seek remedies to the unfair practices of the Canadian Wheat Board. **Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.**

NEW GASOLINE RULE -- Environmental Protection Agency's reformulated gasoline regulation is a big win for farmers and a step forward for the nation says Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy. The rule requires 30 percent of oxygen added to reformulated gasoline be derived from renewable resources. Increasing the U.S. ethanol market could substantially reduce America's dependence on foreign oil. Studies show this new regulation will lessen the nation's dependence on fossil energy and reduce emissions that damage the ozone layer. **Contact: Maria Bynum (202) 720-5192.**

TIMBER SALE REPORT -- USDA's Forest Service has released its Fiscal Year 1993 Timber Sale Program Information Reporting System annual report which highlights the substantial effect that ecosystem management is having on the timber sale program. More sales are being designed to enhance non-timber resources or achieve healthier ecological conditions. **Contact: Barbara Anderson (202) 205-1576.**

AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT -- USDA's Soil Conservation Service is sponsoring a series of eight public forums on natural resource issues throughout the nation. Theme of the forums is "Agriculture and the Environment: Listening to the Grassroots." The first forum was held July 14, in Spokane, WA. Other dates and sites are July 19, Springfield, IL; July 21, Abilene, TX; July 25, Reading, PA; July 28, Sioux Falls, SD; August 2, Longmont, CO; August 4, Columbus, GA; and August 11, Sacramento, CA. **Contact: Diana Morse (202) 720-4772.**

SAFE COOKING AND HANDLING LABELS -- USDA regulations now mandate that safe cooking and handling instructions appear on packaging of all raw poultry and meat products. The mandatory labeling requirement went into effect July 6 and is part of a continuing effort to improve the meat and poultry inspection systems. **Contact: Jacque Knight (202) 720-9113.**

HONORING FALLEN FIRE FIGHTERS -- Flags at Agriculture and Interior Department offices nationwide were lowered to half-staff this week in memory of 14 fire fighters killed in a Colorado wildfire July 6. In a joint statement, Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy and Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt praised the bravery of men and women who died in the South Canyon wildfire near Glenwood Springs, Colorado.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1937 -- Search for new markets for farmers continues with introduction of new consumer products from traditional/nontraditional crops and commodities. Gary Crawford reports. (Weekly cassette -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME # 1418 -- Empowerment zone program in new phase; meat care labels; making recreation possible for everyone; handling yard wastes; better poultry inspection in the works. (Weekly cassette -- 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1928 -- Espy reports on a USDA customer survey; new natural resources inventory released; USDA purchase of beef; what the weak dollar means for farm exports; latest crop assessment calls for higher production, lower prices. (Weekly cassette -- news features.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wednesday, July 20, agricultural outlook; Thursday, July 21, wheat outlook, agricultural outlook for Africa/Middle East; Friday, July 22, cattle outlook, dairy outlook, U.S. farm trade update; Monday, July 25, poultry outlook; Tuesday, July 26, rice outlook, crop/weather update; Wednesday, July 27, vegetable industry outlook; Thursday, July 28, farm numbers report; Friday, July 29, agricultural prices update; oil crops outlook. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

ACTUALITIES -- Secretary of Agriculture **Mike Espy** on USDA's ongoing efforts to streamline services to the public; Acting Assistant Secretary **Patricia Jensen** on the new Poultry Improvement Plan; Deputy Secretary of Agriculture **Richard Rominger**, Assistant Secretary **James Lyons** and Soil Conservation Service Chief **Paul Johnson** on USDA's latest National Resources Inventory.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **DeBoria Janifer** reports on Water Quality Research in West Virginia; **Lynn Wyvill** reports on the Beagle Brigade.

On Satellite Galaxy 7, transponder 9, channel 9, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 3880 Mhz.: Thursdays 3:45 - 4:00 p.m., ET, Mondays 11:00 - 11:15 a.m., ET.

Comments or feedback from you are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services. Call Larry A. Quinn, (202) 720-6072; write 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.

OFF MIKE

CHANGES...are happening all around us in the broadcasting industry and in the federal workplace as well. We're expanding our horizons a bit and broadening our outreach to all radio and television stations nationwide. This **Broadcasters Letter** will continue to help us in the important task of communicating with you and your listeners about the many and varied programs encompassed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Farm broadcasters continue to provide a key link with both the producing and consuming publics and often fill a special role as an interpreter for the public today. We value that contribution and the support it continues to give to USDA. At the same time, we understand the powerful role that all radio and television broadcasters have in helping the public understand the importance of Agriculture's programs which today extend well beyond the farm. That's why we begin a new era with this issue.

FEEDBACK...about use of our recent feature on "Precision Farming" comes from **Brad Hicks** (WGAL-TV, Lancaster, PA). Brad is among several who reported airing these reports telling how computers and satellites can help apply farm chemicals and irrigation water more precisely--cutting costs and risks to environment. If you missed the series and would like a tape, let us know.

OKLAHOMA WHEAT HARVEST...yielded less than expected according to **Carey Martin** (Oklahoma Agrinet, recently re-located from KVOO, Tulsa). I know one reason why. On a recent visit to our family farm in Texas County, I witnessed devastating hail damage nearby to wheat, corn and sorghum estimated at $10 million in crop losses from one night's storm. We talked with Carey about radio public service announcements on food safety which are available. There are some on Smokey Bear's 50th birthday, too. Call if you'd like copies, too.

Larry A. Quinn

LARRY A. QUINN, Chief
Video, Teleconference and Radio Center

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